

Acton Commission on Disabilities Announcements: May, 2014

- The Architectural Access Board decided it wanted to hold a full hearing on the variance for 457 Great Road. The hearing date is July 14 at 2:00 at their offices at One Ashburton Place room 1310 in Boston.
- We will be making a determined effort to cut back on the amount of group emailing we do. This will not only keep us from accidentally breaking Open Meeting Law, but will help Cindy, who gets all her mails from her husband who has to print everything up and bring it home to her. Before you send a "reply all", or write to the cOD as a whole, ask yourself- "Is this really necessary enough for Cindy to add another piece of paper to her pile?"
- The New England ADA center says that while 20 point font is necessary for people who request Large Type handouts, using 18 point is ok for general meeting documents.
- The Mass Office on Disability is helping Mass. Department of Transportation identify accessible meeting spaces in communities by asking all Commissions on Disability to provide them with the information. The first stage is to report our town's polling places, and, later, other types of spaces.
- The Acton Building Department can not speak with separate COD members about the same issue outside of an open meeting
- The FDA is investigating the Judge Rotenberg Center and their use of aversives (electric shock) on the students, who have Autism and developmental disabilities, sent there. The JRC is the only place in the country that uses electric shocks to deal with behavior issues. The FDA is holding hearings about how effective and how dangerous this approach is.

- The regional SPED PAC (Special Education Parents Action Committee) held a meeting on April 29 on the transition of Special Needs students into adulthood. This workshop was presented by the Federation of children with Special Needs.
- The Friends of the Acton Arboretum are holding a fun event on June 1 from 2 -4 at the upper lawn near the main entrance. Yankee plant swap, wear a horticultural themed hat for hat show, prizes and refreshments \$10 . Write babe@acton-ma.gov for more information
- The cCty of Boston is implementing a pilot program that would allow qualified PWD to apply for a residential parking sticker for their PCAs to use when they work at an individual's home. This issue has been making it especially difficult for Boston residents to hire PCAs
- the Brown Political Review had an article comparing the number of certificates granted to allow employers to pay employees with disabilities, particularly those with developmental disabilities, lower than minimum wage (in sheltered workshop programs) and the poverty rate in those populations. You can see the full article at their website.

The state of Connecticut has a proposed a settlement in a lawsuit brought by more than 200 individuals for that state's use of nursing homes as placements for people with mental illness. The settlement will provide more community supports so that those with psychiatric disabilities need not be isolated and segregated.